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ABSTRACT

A carefully-monitored off-campus program for preservice teacher education students can be used as a preventive approach to teacher stress, burnout, and culture shock often experienced by practicing and beginning teachers. Anxiety, caused by a variety of reactions including low self image, threat to security, and fear, is a common element in stress and culture shock. The proposed model features a preservice field experience program that is entered prior to student teaching and also features anxiety in controlled circumstances. The model should be used in a culturally and ethnically diverse community. The first of four program components is an orientation week for students to become familiar with neighborhood programs and agencies. The second component is a nine-week field experience in assigned settings, such as alternative schools, alcohol or drug prevention programs, and mental health facilities. Students should have a minimum of three different assignments each day, lasting from 8:00 a.m. through 10:00 p.m. Assignments should be based on three criteria: student skills and background, the needs of the participating agencies, and the type of experience the student needs. The elements of challenge, intensity, and variety should produce stressful situations. The third and fourth components provide the necessary support and feedback that enable the students to learn and benefit from their situations. The students form a network of support systems, a strategy they can later use as teachers. The program director should hold weekly seminars and supply individual feedback to students. (FG)

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STRESS, BURNOUT AND CULTURE SHOCK: AN EXPERIENTIAL, PRE-SERVICE APPROACH

by

Samuel J. Mungo

Teacher stress and burnout, as any casual review of the literature will reveal, is a topic of great concern to educators today. For those of us working in teacher education and preparing students to work in multicultural settings, a related topic--Culture Shock, is an additional concern. Unfortunately the literature on these topics also reveals that the major emphasis on finding solutions to these concerns seems to be centered on activities for the teacher on the job.[1] There are, however excellent opportunities at the pre-service level, to address these problems in a unique and meaningful way.

It is the purpose of this paper to explore the various aspects of stress and burnout, show the relationship of these aspects to Culture Shock and propose a model for an off-campus field based program that could be used as a preventative approach at the pre-service level.

First, let us look at a representative sample of what the literature has to say about stress and burnout:

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[1]Randall, William, "Stress Management for Educators: Resource Guide," ED 193788, 1980.

Stress begins with anxiety--a disturbance arising from some kind of imbalance within us--this anxiety leads to tension. Tension is a physical reaction to the anxiety. When we are tense, nervous impulses cause changes in our body. When tension reaches a degree of intensity that has adverse affects on the body--we are under stress.[2]

. . . anxiety arises when the person's feelings of self adequacy and security are threatened.[3]

Two kinds of situations lead to stress:
1. individual's skills and abilities are not sufficient to meet the perceived or real demands of the job.
2. individual's work does not meet his/her needs or values.[4]

A main effect of stress is loneliness. A loneliness related to the fact that often there is little community or feeling among fellow teachers.[5]

Pre-service anxiety is usually due to feelings of poor self-concept.[6]

Burnout involves feelings of exhausting development of chronic negative attitudes about oneself and/or clientele, and lowered job performance.[7]

Burnout is a specific type of stress reaction.[8]

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[2]Dennis Sparks, "Helping Clients Manage Stress: A Practical Approach," ED195923, 1989 p. 2.

[3]E. E. Sinclair, et. al., "Anxiety and Cognitive Processes in Problem Solving," Australian Journal of Education, 1974, p. 241.

[4]Baron Derlman, "An Integration of Burnout into a Stress Model," ED 190939, 1980, p. 8.

[5]Arthur Jersild, When Teachers Face Themselves, Columbia U.; Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, 1955, p. 15.

[6]Ken Sinclair, "The Sources and Experiences of Anxiety in Practice Teaching," ED 189084, 1980, p. 4.

[7]Derlman, 1980, p. 3.

[8]K. A. Karasek, "Job Demands, Job Decisions, Lattitude and Mental Strain: Implications for Job Redesign," Administrative Science Quarterly, 1979, p. 285.

Individuals who feel the most negative effects of on the job stress are psychologically "burned out" by the experience.[9]

Burnout - a person is attempting to perform a job by merely going through the motions.[10]

Beginning teachers suffer a great deal of anxiety stemming from the discrepancy between their ideal roles they find themselves following in their practice.[11]

A large part of the anxiety of beginning teachers can be attributed to the abrupt transition from student on campus to teacher.[12]

A sampling of what the literature says about culture shock:

Culture shock--the massive psychic reaction which takes place within the individual plunged into a culture vastly different from his own.[13]

Culture shock--primarily a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture; to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning.[14]

Culture shock is related to a model of stress--threatening stimuli, both sensory and symbolic, are stressors, producing a tension or disequilibrium as a state of stress, inferred from the presence of psychological, social or cultural indications known as stress responses (frustrations, anxiety, feelings of helplessness, irritation, fear).[15]

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[9]C. Masloch, "Job Burnout: How People Cope," Public Welfare, 1978, p. 57.

[10]Robert Rickon, "Teacher Burnout: A Failure of the Supervisory Process," NAASP Bulletin, March 1980, p. 21.

[11]Arthur Jersild, "Behold the Beginner," in: The Real World of the Beginning Teacher, Report of the 19th National EPS Conference, Washington, D.C. NEA, 1966, p. 43.

[12]Don C. Lortie, Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study, Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1975, p. 2.

[13]Barbara Gallatin Anderson, "Adaptive Aspects of Culture Shock," American Anthropologist, 1971, p. 1121.

[14]Peter S. Adler, "The Transitional Experience: An Alternative View of Culture Shock" Journal of Humansistic Psychology, 1975, p. 18.

[15]David Barker, "Culture Shock and Anthropological Field Work," ED 184958, 1980, p. 3.

> Role-shock--the frustration and stresses associated with such discrepancies as between what an individual views as the ideal role for himself and the actual role; and between the role he expects to play and the role he actually plays.[16]

> The emotional and psychological reaction of high activation that is brought about by sudden immersion in a new and different culture.[17]

> Most authorities agree that it is the reduced ability to interact within the social and communication structure of the different society that causes most of the phenomenon of culture shock.[18]

> It is the hidden stress of constantly being "on guard" against sending and receiving innacurate or inappropriate messages in a strange culture that is likely to put one over the comfort level of tension, into the state of culture shock.[19]

The preceding citing of selected literature on the subject of stress, burnout and culture shock was needed, in order for us to see the commonalities. The one common element that is found in all citations is the reference to undo anxiety, caused by any one or a combination of the following: low self-image, threat to security, fear, inadequate skills, helplessness, defensiveness, role conflict, loneliness, unfamilarity and frustration. Whether brought upon by culture immersion, or other situations, these aspects seem to lead to the anxiety that leads to stress or culture shock.

Now that we have identified these aspects, we can develop our model, being sure to address these aspects throughout.

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[16]Francis C. Byrnes, "Role Shock: An Occupational Hazard of American Technical Assistants Abroad," The Annals, 1966, p. 99.

[17]LaRoy Barra, "How Culture Shock Affects Communication," ED 184909, 1976, p. 3.

[18]Barra, 1976, p. 4.

[19]Barra, 1976, p. 5.

MODEL

The proposed model, an adaptation of an existing program, at ISU,[20] will be a pre-service field experience program prior to student teaching. Placing it at the pre-service level is supported by studies that indicate a significant growth in self concept occuring during this type of experience.[21] In addition, in relation to using a field based program rather than a campus based approach, studies by Bernstein and others show students participating in off-campus field experiences benefit from an enhancement of their capability to cope with stressful situations.[22]

The location of the model should be in a community with a diverse cultural/ethnic population. Not only is self-concept enhanced by experiences in such varied settings,[23] but among the approaches suggested to overcome culture shock--exposure to many types of people and ideologies[24]--seems to make it advantageous to locate in a diverse community. It is not necessary to have a wide range of non-white ethnic diversity, but cultural diversity in its

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[20]Samuel Mungo, "ISU Urban Education Program," unpublished Report, Illinois State University, 1979.

[21]David Silvernail, "Assessing the Effectiveness of Pre-Service Field Experiences in Reducing Teacher Anxiety," ED 191828, 1980.

[22]Judith Bernstein, "Urban Field Education: An Opportunity and Structure for Enhancing Students Personal and Social Efficacy," paper presented at Philadelphia, Great Lakes Colleges, Association, Urban Semester, 1974.

[23]Harold Harty, "Preservice Teacher Self Concept from the Campus Through Early Field Experiences in Multicultural Settings," ED 179630, 1976.

[24]Barra, 1976, p. 5.

broader sense, refers to diversity in religious populations, the white ethnics, the aged, handicapped, etc. As the field experience component of the model is described, the use of this broad view of cultural diversity will be made clear.

Component One--Orientation

The first week off-campus is to be used for orientation to program and agencies by the Director and staff members of the programs to be used. It is essential that students get into the agencies and programs for these orientations, to begin the steps toward familiarity, and the reduction of fear and anxiety. It is during this week that the beginnings of the development of the concept of social support, to be described in component three, takes place. Experiences of sharing feelings, openness to questions and apprehensions should take place, so that the program, as a growth experience, is presented. Although not all anxiety and uncertainty will be alleviated, a beginning will be made that will continue over the remaining weeks of the program. The concern constantly addressed this week is very well stated by Maslow:

> The human being is very apt to repress his anxieties and fears and even to deny to himself that they exist. To such a person, the unfamiliar, the vaguely perceived, the mysterious, the hidden, the unexpected, are all apt to be threatening. One way of rendering them familiar, predictable, controllable, i.e., unfrightening and harmless, is to know them and to understand them. This knowledge may have not only a growing forward function, but also an anxiety-reducing function.[25]

Component Two--Field Experiences

Nine week Block. The field experiences will take place

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[25]A. H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, New York: Van Nostrand Co., 2nd Ed. 1968, p. 64.

primarily in non-school settings, including whatever social agencies, mental health facilities, alternative schools, drug and alcohol centers, geriatric units, correctional facilities, etc. that are available in the given community. The main concern is to provide experiences in programs and agencies that will be culturally/ethnically diverse. The specific assignments should be made by the Director, based on knowledge of students' skills and backgrounds, and the needs of the community based programs. These assignments, in order to provide the kinds of experiences that will accomplish the goals of prevention, will be characterized by three elements: time, variety, and challenge.

Time. In order to insure the intensity needed to gain not only the maximum from the experiences, but to set up stressfull settings, it is suggested that students' day be full, starting at 8:00-8:30 to 10:00 p.m., with the time being divided among three different assignments--ful time 8:00-3:00, part time 3:30-5:00, and evening 6:00-10:00. Seminars and classes with Director would fit into this schedule. Students will change assignments after 4 weeks.

Variety. Students will be assigned a minimum of 3 separate assignments per day, with a total of 7-8 experiences throughout the program. Assignments should be determined by three criteria: skills and background of the student, needs of the agencies and programs, and areas of experience needed by the student. Each student will be given at least one assignment per day in a setting that will be culturally unfamiliar, or work with a population that is ethnically different. Priority is also given to agency

needs, so that in some cases students will be assigned to activities that are foreign to them and seem to have little relationship to teaching. What they will have relationship to, however, will be their growth and awareness of role differentiation, both professionally and culturally.

Challenge. Due to the above two elements, students should find themselves in some unsettling, stressfull and unfamiliar settings. This element of challenge is essential if students are to experience in a controlled environment, some of the aspects of culture shock and stress.

So that the reader soes not think that participants in this model are going to be subjected to an unnecessary trauma, haphazardly, this approach is based partly on research done on the Outward Bound[26] participants, which supports the approach using controlled challenging and stressful experiences. These studies, among other findings, indicate that mental and emotional stress was extremely valuable in causing participants to examine their own behavior and learn about themselves.[27] It is important to keep in mind, throughout student's stress related experiences, that stress can have motivating powers as long as the stress or crisis is not allowed to develop debilitating qualities.[28] In addition, researchers, such as Adler, have found that having students experience culture shock can actually contribute to their learning:

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[26]Gary Richards, "Some Educational Implications and Contributions of Outward Bound," ED 194266, 1977.

[27]Richards, 1977, p. 59.

[28]Richards, 1977, p. 63.

1. Learning involves change and movement from one cultural frame of reference to another. Individuals are presented with changes in cultural landscapes.
2. Culture shock assumes unique importance and meaning to the individuals. Individuals undergo a highly personal experience of special significance to themselves.
3. Change becomes provocative. Individuals are forced into some form of introspection and self-examination.
4. Adjustment is extreme in its ups and downs. Individuals undergo various forms of frustration, anxiety, and personal pain.
5. Confrontation forces personal investigation of relationships. Individuals must deal with the realationships and processes inherent in their situation as outsiders.
6. New ideas force behavioral experimentation. Individuals must, of necessity, try out new attitudes and behaviors. This becomes a trial and error process until appropriate behavioral responses emerge.
7. The results from step (6) present unlimited opportunity for contrast and comparison. Individuals have at their disposal an unending source of diversity with which they can compare and contrast their own previous experiences.[29]

It becomes obvious that you do not just "drop" students in these challenging situations, but to maximize their learning and analysis of their experiences, it is necessary to provide support and feedback. The following two components provide just that.

Component Three--Social Support

Social support is:

> Information leading one to believe that he/she is cared for and loved, esteemed and valued, and belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation that emphasizes the individual's perception that support is available when needed.[30]

This network is the participants themselves. In order to survive the challenging experiences, the culture shock, the stress,

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[29]P. Adler, "Culture Shock and the Cross Cultural Learning Experience," in R. Brislin and P. Pederson, Cross Cultural Orientation Programs, New York: Gardner Press, Inc. 1976, p. 14-15.

[30]S. Cobb, "Social Support As a Moderator of Life Stress," Psychosomatic Medicine, 1976, p. 312.

they will initially be exposed to, students must be given the opportunity to develop into a close-knit, cooperative, caring unit. Various devices during orientation week, and continuing throughout the program, designed to promote "groupness" should be used. Activities such as group work projects, sharing sessions, cooperative assignments, etc. can be used. Although the Director is available, more and more of the ongoing support--the "soft shoulder" and the "sounding board," must be seen as coming from within the group. In other words, the development of a support group among the participants must take place. This is essential for the mitigating of stressful life events.[31] As students share experiences, switch assignments, and thus face similar challenges, the quality of the emotional support increases--and the means of reducing anxiety are increased.[32] As the Outward Bound Research states:

> As members generally identify their common problems, learn to express and utilize observational and feelings data, and build a group organization, individual anxieties reduce, and the individual moves toward a less defensive behavior.[33]

These strategies--support systems, sharing with others, caring and cooperating with ppers--can b carried over beyond the program. Once experienced, and found to be successful in a limited, controlled environment, such as the program provides, these

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[31]Deborah Rhoads, "Life Change, Social Support, Psychological Symptomology: A Search for Causal Relationships," ED 190922, 1980, p. 6-.

[32]G. Caplan, Support Systems and Community Mental Health: Lectures on Concept Development, New York: Behavioral Publications, 1974, 0. 4.

[33]Richards, 1977, p. 64.

appraoches and strategies can be used by future teachers when they face similar anxieties on the job.

Component Four--Seminars and Feedback

The Director will hold weekly seminars and have periodic individual conferences with participants. Using these meetings, coupled with the use of feedback cards or diaries, an opportunity for two-way feedback can occur between Director and participants, using invited community staff, between agency staff and participants. Opportunities for clarification of cultural confusion, analysis of experiences, and discussion of role determination can take place at these sessions where both student and agency personnel can openly discuss concerns.

Although the Director will be available for individual conferences and the seminars, it is suggested that in regard to the day to day contact with students in their assignments, he take the role of the Wizard Gandalf of the Hobbit Trilogy. The Wizard would set the characters on the path, set them forth toward unknown challenges, then fade to the background, returning at times of intense crisis and problem, to help alleviate the difficulty, and set them again on another challenging path. Not that the Director will not visit sites, etc., but the role is not one of "protective overseer." The "Wizard" can be more successful in encouraging the use of the support systems alluded to.

In conclusion, it is felt that although this model allows for much flexibility dependant on population of students and community resources available, the components as structured do

address the aspects of the anxiety leading to stress and culture shock listed at the beginning of this paper. This model, used at the pre-service level as suggested, will enable students to experience stress and culture shock in a controlled environment, allow them to experience the benefit of strategies involving support systems, sharing, etc., in overcoming these stresses and anxieties, and can lead to overall growth in positive self-image and coping skills. In the final analysis, it will enable the participants to experience various levels of s lf growth:

> Recognition of the growth inspired by overcoming the difficult, awareness of the self that comes of a person "meeting himself" in crisis, and the compassion and understanding fused into the minds of people who overcome adversity together.[34]

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[34]Richards, 1977, p. 60.

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